

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 CU-04 IO-13 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 RSR-01

(ADP)W

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R 251440Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8349

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

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DEPARTMENT PASS USIA -- VOA/IPS/IAA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SF

SUBJ: CONTINUED LIBERAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY

REF: PRETORIA A-118

1. DESPITE SMALL NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED, WHITE LIBERAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY CONTINUES TO GENERATE GREAT DEAL OF PRESS COVERAGE AND PUBLIC INTEREST. MOST RECENTLY, VERLIGTE ACTION (VA), THE NON-PARTY POLITICAL MOVEMENT ESTABLISHED LAST MONTH (REFAIR), ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAD OPENED ITS DOORS TO MEMBERSHIP BY PEOPLE OF ALL RACES. FORMER MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR THEO GERDENER IS ALSO REPORTED TO BE FORMING NEW LIBERALLY ORIENTED POLITICAL PARTY.

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2. VA SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED JULY 24 THAT ITS NATIONAL INTERIM COMMITTEE HAD DECIDED ACCEPT MEMBERS "IRRESPECTIVE OF LANGUAGE OR COLOR." DECISION APPARENTLY COMES AFTER DEBATE WITHIN VA ON NATURE OF THE MOVEMENT'S CONTACTS WITH BLACK LEADERS AND CYNICAL COMMENTS FROM BLACKS ABOUT AN ALL-WHITE VERLIGTE ORGANIZATION. BLACK MEMBERSHIP SHOULD FACILITATE INTERRACIAL CONSULTATIONS ON WHICH VA HAS LAID MUCH STRESS. IT ALSO FORECLOSES POSSIBILITY OF VA BECOMING POLITICAL PARTY BECAUSE MIXED RACE POLITICAL PARTIES ARE FORBIDDEN UNDER SOUTH AFRICAN LAW. IT REMAINS BE SEEN TO WHAT EXTENT SAG WILL COUNTENANCE INTERRACIAL ACTIVITIES UNDER VA AEGIS.

3. GERDENER, WHO RESIGNED FROM CABINET LAST YEAR TO ESTABLISH ACTION SOUTH AND SOUTHERN AFRICA, A NON-PARTY LIBERAL MOVEMENT NOT UNLIKE VA, REPORTEDLY HAD BEEN PLANNING NEW POLITICAL PARTY FOR SOME TIME. ESTABLISHMENT OF VA IS SAID TO HAVE CAUSED HIM TO ACCELERATE THESE PLANS. THIS STANDS TO REASON BECAUSE GERDENER'S POLITICAL ACTIVITIES SINCE HIS RESIGNATION HAVE FAILED CATCH ON AND HE CAN ILL AFFORD TO STAND BY WHILE VA GARNERS POTENTIAL RECRUITS AND CONTRIBUTORS. GERDENER'S NEW PARTY WILL HAVE "TWO-STREAM" POLICY; ULTIMATE INTEGRATION OF WHITES, COLOREDS AND INDIANS IN ONE STATE AND "ABSOLUTE INDEPENDENCE" FOR AFRICAN HOMELANDS.

4. VA SPOKESMAN, DR. CONNIE ALANT HAS DISCLAIMED ANY INTENTION TO ASSOCIATE VA WITH GERDENER'S PARTY, REITERATING VA'S INDEPENDENCE FROM ALL POLITICAL PARTIES.

5. IN ASSESSING PROSPECTS OF THESE LIBERAL GROUPS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT VA HAS ADVANTAGE OVER GERDENER IN HAVING NO INHERITED POLITICAL ENEMIES AND PRESENTING FRESH FACE TO PRESS AND PUBLIC. HOWEVER, IT REMAINS BE SEEN WHETHER VA CAN SUSTAIN PUBLIC INTEREST AND HIGH ENTHUSIASM OF ITS MEMBERS OR SWIFTLY FADE FROM POLITICAL SCENE LIKE GERDENER LAST YEAR. GIVEN HISTORY OF AVOWEDLY LIBERAL POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA, ODDS REMAIN HIGH THAT NEITHER VA NOR GERDENER'S PARTY WILL BE MORE THAN A MARGINAL POLITICAL PHENOMENON.
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